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REPORT
OF THE
TWENTY-FIFTH
Annual Conference
OF THE
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION,
HELD IN THE
HALL OF THE
XXth Century Club and Institute,
NEWLAND, NORTHAMPTON,
ON
GOOD FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AND EASTER SUNDAY,
April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 1905.

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RE REPORT

OF THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

APRIL 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 1905.

THE Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation was held at the Twentieth Century Club, Newland, Northampton, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 1905.

COUNCILLOR J. GRIBBLE, the provisional chairman, gave the following opening address :—

Comrades,—In opening this, the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation, I wish to express how greatly I feel the honour to have been appointed provisional chairman, as I am only a young member in the movement, having joined the Northampton Branch on the 4th of November, 1894, and since then I have never been so happy as when working for the Social Revolution. Although only a young member myself, I am proud to say we have still with us comrades, full of life and energy, who have been working for the Socialist ideal throughout the whole 25 years of the S.D.F.'s existence. Yes, I am proud, because it not only affords me the opportunity of seeing, knowing, and working with some of the pioneers of the grandest and most noble movement yet known, but should I have the fortune to live to the proverbial three score and ten, I shall be able to describe them to the children then living under the Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth. During the past 25 years our work has been principally educational. When we have fought elections, the object has been propaganda, or the testing of our strength; but economic circumstances make it imperative that we should, and that with all our might, fight to win seats on the legislative and administrative bodies, not only with a view to bring about social and political reform, but because they place at our disposal a better platform from which to propagate our principles, whilst at the same time educating our comrades so as to be ready to manage and control affairs in the

'interests of the people when the crash comes to the present capitalist system. And we have only to look around us to see signs of the coming crash on every hand. Socialism has a fair number of representatives on the different administrative bodies, but nothing like so many as it would have if greater attention were paid to organisation at election times. There is not half sufficient canvassing done, and although we are opposed to canvassing, and would make it illegal, still whilst the capitalist parties do it, if we want to win elections, we must do it also, and that thoroughly. Up to now we have been unable to capture a standing on the most important platform in the country, viz., the floor of the House of Commons, and therefore the capitalist oracles declare we are making very little progress; but the advance of Socialism, and the hold it has upon the people, cannot be judged altogether by the number of Social-Democrats sitting in the House of Commons, or on the different local administrative bodies, as financial difficulties often stand in the way of our contesting many constituencies where we should not only record a good vote, but return our men. This question of finance should have the earnest attention of the E.C. in the immediate future.

Little more than 25 years ago, scientific Socialism was unknown in England; to-day it is discussed in the workshop, working men's clubs, Sunday schools, temperance societies, improvement classes, co-operative societies, and trade unions, and the latter organisations are rapidly coming our way. The coming into being of the L.R.C. shows that to a great degree they recognise that their class interests are opposed to the interests of the capitalist class, and it only requires a few sturdy Social-Democrats in the next Parliament to direct them on the road to their emancipation. Our American comrades at the Presidential elections last year polled 400,000 votes. Had we the opportunity of testing our strength in like manner, I am convinced the result would bring consternation to the capitalists' camps, surprise at our strength to a large number of our own members, and hope to our continental comrades. The holding of that magnificent conference on State Maintenance at the Guildhall, which was presided over by Sir John Gorst, is proof of the rapid strides we are making, and the economic changes that are taking place. The fact also that after a record year of trade, and whilst we are still breaking records, tens of thousands of skilled artisans are walking the streets unemployed, that twelve million human beings live on or below the poverty line, and it was found necessary to promise in the King's Speech that the unemployed problem would be dealt with by Parliament, ought to convince all that we are nearing a break up of the present system. Well, comrades, I on behalf of the Northampton Branch welcome you all to this ancient borough. I am pleased to say we Northamptonians are keeping up our traditional name for being in the van of progress. Northampton was distinguished in mediæval times by the holding of Parliaments here, and some time ago it again distinguished itself by the

splendid fights it made for religious and political freedom by returning Charles Bradlaugh to Parliament; and at the next General Election it will again distinguish itself by returning, at the top of the poll, the first Socialist-Democrat to the House of Commons. It was in 1889 that a Socialist was first run for the Northampton Town Council. At that time every elector had two votes, our poll was 260, and we have contested every election since. During the last three years we have contested each ward, and now each elector has only one vote, and our poll has been as follows:—1902, 2,217; 1903, 3,367; 1904, 3,946. In 1895 F. G. Jones, at the parliamentary election, polled 1,216, of which 536 were plumpers and 680 splits. Now if the cross voting works out in the same proportion at the next General Election as in '95, our vote will be somewhere near 6,000, which would give us a clear 1,000 majority. A splendid feature of our local elections is the greater number that goes to the poll the better for us. In 1904 there were polled 128 more votes than in 1903, yet the capitalist parties polled 440 less and the Socialists 579 more, therefore I claim we are justified in saying Northampton is still in the van. There is one other point I wish to touch upon. I remarked that we, as an organisation, were often hampered for want of funds. Now my opinion is we have got to use capitalist methods to obtain them, and consequently I, with two other comrades, started the Pioneer Boot Works; and here again Northampton has distinguished itself, for on the first year's trading we have sent to the War Chest £180, and at present our weekly subscription amounts to about £8, or at the rate of £400 per year, not far short of what was last year my ideal figure, but will be next year my starting point, and with the continued support of comrades in other towns, we intend to build up a business that will enable the S.D.F. to send missionaries throughout the whole of the country. Now, comrades, we have got three days' work in front of us, which I hope will be got through without any undue heat being thrown into it. I hope your visit to Northampton will be a pleasant one, and that your labours will do something to hasten on the Social Revolution.

On the motion of J. Jones (South West Ham) and T. JEFFERSON (Chorley), J. Gribble was appointed chairman of the Conference. Dan Irving (Burnley) was elected deputy-chairman. G. J. Jones (South West Ham), J. P. Lloyd (Marylebone) and G. C. Townsend (Lincoln) were appointed Standing Orders and Credentials Committee, and E. McAllen (Stratford) and F. H. Gorle (Central) tellers.

In the discussion on the financial statement, A. J. Armstrong (Carlisle) raised the question of financial help to the Scottish branches, which he described as the weakest link in our chain. It was imperative that the hands of the Scottish District Council should be strengthened. An able man in the person of comrade

Thomas Kennedy, of Aberdeen, had been engaged as organiser to work over a wide area in the hope of retrieving the position, but he must be supplied with the sinews of war.

J. G. WEBSTER (Aberdeen), who had special instructions in this matter, attempted to continue the discussion, but a point of order was raised, and it was agreed to return to the subject later in the Conference.

The consideration of the yearly report was deferred. The financial statement was adopted on the motion of DAN IRVING (Burnley) and J. F. GREEN (Central). The only nomination for Secretary was that of H. W. Lee, who was unanimously re-elected.

The Credentials Committee gave in their first report, which stated that there were 56 delegates present, representing 47 branches. Some additional delegates arrived during the Conference, and the full list was as follows:—

BRANCHES.	DELEGATES.
Aberdeen	J. G. Webster.
Accrington	G. F. Crawford.
Bacup	J. Buchanan.
Battersea	D. Carmichael.
Bermondsey	F. Porter.
Birmingham (Central)	G. T. Biles.
Blackburn	H. Greenwood.
Blackburn (St. Paul's)	I. Smethurst.
Bow and Bromley	F. E. Davey.
Bradford	A. M. Dassin.
Burnbank	J. Marshall.
Burnley	Councillor Dan Irving.
Camberwell	W. A. Woodroffe.
Camborne	C. R. Vincent.
Carlisle	A. J. Armstrong.
Central	J. F. Green and Coun. F. H. Gorle.
Chorley	T. Jefferson.
Croydon (West)	Rose Jarvis.
Darwen	E. Edgley.
Dewsbury	W. Baizley.
East London (Jewish)	B. Kahan.
Edmonton	Coun. W. J. G. Mercer & D. Pearson
Edinburgh	Kathleen B. Rough.
Fulham	F. G. Jones.
Hackney and Kingsland	A. Inkpin.
Hanley	F. Rose.
Ilkston	T. Mayfield.
Islington (South)	W. S. Cluse.
Kentish Town	G. Lusty.
Kirkcaldy	E. Draper.
Lambeth	A. Courtney.
Leeds (West)	W. Pitts.
Lincoln	G. Townsend and Martin Judge.
Liverpool (East)	H. M. Hyndman.
Lynn	Herbert Burrows.
Manchester (Central)	J. E. McGlasson.
" Manchester (South West)	Eugen Barnako.
Marylebone	J. P. Lloyd.

BRANCHES.	DELEGATES.
Methil	W. Barrett.
Mile End	Mrs. B. Kahan.
Nelson	W. Westley.
Northampton	Councillor J. Gribble, C. J. Scott, and W. Kirton.
Norwich	— Lovell.
Poplar	R. Baizley.
Rawtenstall	D. M. Lancaster.
Reading	E. Short and T. Waters.
Rochdale	John Moore.
Rushden & Higham Ferrers	C. Chamberlain.
Southampton	W. Warr.
Southend	F. Driver.
South Norwood	T. A. Roberts.
Southwark	F. J. Shirley.
Shoreditch	G. W. Patterson and G. Powell.
Stratford	E. McAllen.
South West Ham	Councillor J. Jones.
Sheffield (Brightside)	G. H. Fletcher.
" (Crookes)	Mrs. H. M. Hyndman.
Todmorden	A. H. Watson.
Tottenham	A. S. Ash.
Tunbridge Wells	Miss M. M. A. Ward.
Walthamstow	A. Harder.
Whitethaven	W. G. Veals.
Wigan	T. A. Rostron.
Wellingborough	

H. QUELCH spoke to the following resolution suggested by the Executive Council on the question of subscriptions:—

“ All branches shall be levied 3d. per month per member as contributions to the Central Office, and the branches shall be left to regulate their own subscriptions.”

An amendment from the Central Branch was not pressed.

J. F. GREEN (Central), DAN IRVING (Burnley), J. JONES (South West Ham), A. H. WATSON (Todmorden), and W. A. WOODROFFE (Camberwell) took part in the discussion.

An amendment from the Rushden Branch, fixing the contributions at a penny per week per member, half of which should go to the Central Office, received only five votes, and the Executive Council’s proposal was carried almost unanimously. After a slight further discussion, it was agreed that the decision of the Conference cleared the Agenda paper of the remaining resolutions and amendments on the question of subscriptions.

The election of the Executive was held over until the arrival of other delegates who were expected.

It was agreed to take political matters and the question of our relations with the L.R.C. in private on the following morning, and the Conference proceeded to the discussion on Socialist unity.

The Burnley Branch proposed:—

“ That the Executive Council be instructed to take steps to convene a conference, to be afterwards held annually, of all

Socialist organisations in Great Britain, the business of which shall be to discuss, and if possible, agree upon a line of common policy and action upon all matters of national and international importance to the Socialist Movement."

DAN IRVING believed that the resolution would be a means towards unity. They must take some definite steps beyond merely expressing pious opinions in favour of unity. Bringing people together would wear down fictitious antagonisms, and they could accomplish this even if it were felt necessary to maintain separate organisations. He instanced several questions now before the public upon which it would be highly desirable for all Socialists to have a common policy and action.

A. J. ARMSTRONG (Carlisle) moved the following amendment:—

"That this Conference re-affirms its previous decision regarding Socialist Unity, and trusts the Executive Council will continue its endeavours to bring about unity in accordance with the decisions arrived at by the Amsterdam Congress."

He said that they all agreed that unity was desirable, but how that unity was to be attained demanded a good deal of consideration.

HERBERT BURROWS (Lynn) asked that the organisations which Dan Irving had in his mind should be mentioned, because at Amsterdam the Labour Representation Committee was represented. DAN IRVING said he would exclude trade unions and admit on the basis of the International Congress.

On the question as to whether the L.R.C. would be included among the organisations to be invited to the proposed conference, J. JONES (South West Ham) declared the L.R.C. to be not an organisation, but a federation of organisations.

H. M. HYNDMAN (E. Liverpool), speaking as a member of the International Bureau, expressed the astonishment of himself and many other Socialists that the French Socialists, with differences greater than ours, should have been able to come together, and they in England should not have been able to do so. What was aimed at was definite consolidation of the party, but he was convinced that the Burnley resolution would tend further to break them up, because they did not want an assembly in which those composing it would be atoms dominated by their various executives. The political side to him was indifferent. What they were at was consolidation on the social side.

J. MOORE (Rochdale) could not see what we stood to lose by calling such a conference. Somebody would have to take the lead in establishing the unity of the Socialist forces. We must recognise, too, that the political part of our work was as important as any other part. HERBERT BURROWS (Lynn) was in favour of Socialist unity, but the question was whether the proposal would bring it about. Would they be prepared to submit to being out-voted, say, on the Suffrage question?

W. S. CRUSE (South Islington) spoke in support of the resolution, believing that if we could get together with the I.L.P. in conference it would remove a lot of false impressions created among the rank and file.

The previous question was moved and negatived, and the debate was continued.

J. JONES (South West Ham) complained that certain professed Socialists gave expression to anti-Socialist views at trade union congresses and on other occasions. He characterised their conduct as based on the principle of "Coddlin's the friend not Short." The Social-Democratic Federation was willing to work with the Independent Labour Party, but the unity must be real, not sham.

H. QUELCH thought the Social-Democratic Federation was not the body to call such a conference as was suggested. If they attempted it they would be misrepresented at the very outset. The Hammersmith Socialist Society had failed in an attempt to promote unity. The Social-Democratic Federation was not more likely to succeed. A conference would, in his opinion, make for a perpetuation of differences rather than tend to their elimination. He therefore supported the Carlisle amendment.

W. J. G. MERCER (Edmonton) was opposed to political opportunism, and strongly urged the necessity for keeping clear of the tricks of orthodox politicians, who were interested in particular Parliamentary measures. He was for straight, clear cut, class-conscious action. There could be no objection to a conference if they could secure united action on a common basis.

E. MCALLEN (Stratford) asked the Conference to bear in mind that the Social-Democratic Federation recognised that there was a class war, whereas the Independent Labour Party officially did not. J. E. McGLASSON (Manchester Central) did not think they need be afraid of being outvoted at such a Conference as that proposed by the Burnley Branch, and referred to the fact that a resolution against the limited Suffrage had been carried at the last E.R.C. Conference against the wishes of the L.R.C. Executive. He believed that if a resolution in favour of State Maintenance had been placed upon the L.R.C. Agenda it would have been carried, but the delegates had received instructions to vote for the resolution in favour of feeding hungry children because it appeared on the Agenda.

MARTIN JUDGE (Lincoln) said this matter came up annually. When was it going to stop? The subject was fought for a week at the Amsterdam Congress. After all, the difference between the Independent Labour Party and the Social-Democrats was a milk-and-water affair compared to the hostility which, at the Amsterdam Congress, was exhibited between the several French sections.

W. BARRETT (Methil) wanted to know what was meant by all Socialist organisations in Great Britain, the I.L.P. was the only body which had been mentioned.

A. M. DESSIN (Bradford), speaking from local experience, doubted if it were possible to agree to a common line of policy with the Independent Labour Party in the matter of running candidates for Parliament.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) in replying, took exception to the speech made by H. Quelch, on the ground that he was not a delegate, and that on this matter he did not represent the Executive, as it had not been discussed by the full Executive.

DAN IRVING, continuing, said he was prepared to widen the scope of the resolution to include any organisation which could be represented at International and Labour Congresses. It was an assumption on our part to say that we would not take part in a Conference with those permitted to take part in International Congresses. It made him think that though many of them had the words of unity on their lips the spirit of unity was absent from their hearts. They might have a spurious I.L.P.'ism in London, but that was not the case with the provinces. He recognised little difference between the Independent Labour Party and themselves. That was the reason why he wanted unity, so that a common front could be presented in the constituencies. He frankly confessed that he was an opportunist, and he recognised politics as a means to an end. They were preaching unity to the workers, while they themselves remained disunited.

The Carlisle amendment was then put and carried by 45 votes to 7, and was adopted *nom. con.* as a substantive motion.

The Chairman having declared that the adoption of the amendment disposed of the Burnley resolution,

DAN IRVING complained that the resolution had been ignored, and amid some uproar, he declared his intention of leaving the Conference unless a vote of the delegates was taken upon it. Considerable heat was displayed, and for a few moments the chairman had a difficulty in maintaining order. Finally he consented to put the Burnley resolution to the Conference, though some protests were raised against his ruling. The Burnley resolution was rejected by 33 votes to 30. Thereupon DAN IRVING again rose amidst renewed uproar and complained that certain delegates had voted directly contrary to their instructions. The Chairman called upon Irving to obey the rulings of the chair.

A division was demanded and the voting was as follows:—

For : 31.

Aberdeen (2)	Rawtenstall (2)
Accrington (2)	Rochdale
Birmingham	Edmonton (2)
Burnley (2)	Sheffield (Brightside)
Bradford	Hackney (Crookes)
"	Islington (South)
Blackburn(Central)(2)	Shoreditch (2)
Liverpool (East)	Southampton
" (St. Paul's)	Todmorden
Camberwell	Wigan

Bacup	Ilkeston
Battersea	Kirkcaldy
Burnbank	Kentish Town
Camborne	Lambeth
Carlisle (2)	Lynn
Central (2)	Lincoln (2)
Dewsbury	Manchester (Central)
East London	" (S.W.)
Edinburgh	Marylebone
Fulham	Nelson

AGAINST : 36.	
Bacup	Northampton (3)
Battersea	Poplar
Burnbank	Reading (2)
Camborne	Southend
Carlisle (2)	Southwark
Central (2)	South West Ham
Dewsbury	Stratford
East London	Tottenham
Edinburgh	Tunbridge Wells
Fulham	Walthamstow

J. F. GREEN (Central) made a formal protest against the last division being taken, which he held to be absolutely opposed to the ordinary regulations of public conferences.

On the motion of A. BARNAKO (Manchester), seconded by J. F. GREEN (Central), the congratulations of the Conference were sent to the Social-Democratic Party of Hungary wishing them success in the establishment of a daily newspaper.

On the motion of H. M. HYNDMAN (East Liverpool), seconded by HERBERT BURROWS (Lynn), a resolution of sympathy and fraternity with the Socialists throughout the Russian Empire in their struggle against bureaucracy and autocracy was unanimously carried.

A telegram of fraternal greetings and best wishes for Socialist unity was dispatched to the I.L.P.

Dan Irving having resigned his position as deputy chairman to the Conference, J. F. Green was appointed in his stead.

After a slight discussion it was decided to adjourn the discussion on political matters arising out of the Annual Report until the next day.

J. G. WEBSTER (Aberdeen) earnestly asked the Executive to devote a part of its funds to helping the Scottish organisation. At present, so far as he knew, there was no Socialist candidate before any Scottish constituency. He asked for assistance because economic necessity had made the northern kingdom more class-conscious than the southern.

A. J. ARMSTRONG (Carlisle) and MRS. HYNDMAN supported the appeal.

Delegates from Lancashire and other North of England centres also asked for financial and organising assistance.

Replying to the discussion, the SECRETARY pointed out that for the last three years Scotland had received financial assistance from the Central Office, whilst Lancashire, though not receiving so much help as Scotland, had not been entirely left out in the cold. As regards J. Jones, Lady Warwick had agreed to pay his wages for six months, through the S.D.F., so that he might be in a position to attend to his duties on the West Ham Town Council, and

devote the rest of his time to Socialist propaganda and organisation. The work of organising the unemployed in West Ham had prevented his doing work outside London until a few weeks after Christmas, and the branches must bear in mind that he was but one man, and that he could not be about all over the country. Arrangements were being made for Jones to pay a visit to the North as soon as possible.

A. INKPIN (Hackney and Kingsland) formally moved the following resolution:

"That this Conference expresses its appreciation of the good work done by the Pioneer Boot Works, and, in view of the great possibilities latent in such undertakings, calls upon the members of the S.D.F. to do their utmost to support the same, or any extension of the principles, by every means in their power."

The resolution was supported by W. WARR (Southampton), C. J. SCOTT (Northampton), and MARTIN JUDGE (Lincoln).

The CHAIRMAN considered that a great debt was due from the S.D.F. to the Northampton comrades for the assistance they had given to the organisation through the Pioneer Boot Works.

The resolution was carried unanimously, and the Conference adjourned.

On the Saturday morning the chair was occupied by the deputy-chairman, J. F. GREEN. The proceedings for the first sitting were to be held in private, but it was afterwards found necessary to exclude the press and public for the whole day. It was agreed that Herbert Burrows, J. F. Green, and H. W. Lee, be appointed a committee to convey a résumé of the day's proceedings to the press.

The Standing Orders Committee reported the arrival of further delegates. Some discussion took place on the irregularity of a credential from the Govan Branch, and it was finally rejected.

Letters of greetings were read from the Socialist Sunday School Union at Glasgow and from the Northampton Clarion Fellowship.

The Northampton Branch had placed the following resolution on the agenda paper:

"To consider the political situation at Northampton and to take a vote thereon."

The discussion was opened by J. GRIBBLE (Northampton) who described at length the political situation at Northampton, the continued growth of the Socialist vote in the town, and urged, as it was important that H. M. Hyndman should be returned to the House of Commons, that Northampton presented a far better opportunity of his being returned to Parliament than was the case with Burnley. On the other side, DAN IRVING (Burnley) contended

that, though they were not prepared to promise a certainty of Hyndman being returned as the Northampton comrades seemed prepared to do, nevertheless, they could show by the figures polled in local elections that Burnley was as likely, if not more likely, to return H. M. Hyndman to Parliament as was Northampton.

H. QUERICH (Executive Council) having spoken, W. S. CLUSE (S. Islington) moved:

"That this Conference re-affirms the position taken up by the Executive in regard to Hyndman's candidature."

The discussion was continued by G. W. PATTERSON (Shore-ditch), and J. G. WEBSTER (Aberdeen) moved:

"That after hearing the statements of comrades GRIBBLE (Northampton) and IRVING (Burnley) and that of the Executive Council, this Conference resolves that comrade Hyndman be selected to stand as Parliamentary candidate for Northampton and Burnley in order that no opportunity be lost of securing his return to Parliament at the next Election."

J. JONES (South-West Ham) spoke strongly against the amendment; and, after some further discussion the amendment was rejected by 41 votes to 15. The resolution to maintain the candidature of H. M. Hyndman at Burnley as against the desire of the Northampton Branch that he should be put forward at Northampton, was carried by 46 votes to 12.

At noon J. GRIBBLE resumed the chairmanship.

On behalf of the Rawtenstall Branch, D. M. LANCASTER withdrew the resolution on the agenda concerning the candidature of W. GEE in Rossendale.

The following resolution was formally moved by W. ASH (Tottenham), seconded by D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea) and carried by 36 votes to 33:

"That the plenary powers granted the Executive Council by the Conferences of 1903 and 1904, to deal with certain internal difficulties, be now rescinded."

On the question of re-affiliation to the L.R.C., it was agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Executive, and take the discussion on the resolution from Rochdale:

"That the S.D.F. make application to rejoin the L.R.C."

The following from Stratford was allowed to go forward as an amendment:

"Whereas the elected L.R.C. candidates have shown by their Parliamentary actions that they are in no way class-conscious representatives of the proletariat, this Conference affirms the present attitude of the S.D.F. towards the L.R.C."

J. MOORE (Rochdale), speaking in support of the resolution, said that they in Lancashire had come to the conclusion that the L.R.C. was a living political force; it was obtaining an influence among

the working classes in the great industrial centres. The S.D.F. had been the means in the past of shaping the workmen's thoughts and ideas in the direction of political independence; we had prepared the way, sown the seed, done the spade work, and then allowed others to get the credit of our work. Breaking away from Liberal and Tory associations meant a very great step in advance—a revolution in ideas; and if we refused to take part in the movement which resulted from our work, then we were going to be left behind.

HALLIWELL GREENWOOD (Blackburn) seconded the resolution from a purely revolutionary standpoint. The L.R.C. represented the beginning of the last and greatest struggle for the political machinery of the country, by the most intelligent and best organised of the workers. This did not seem to be appreciated by the S.D.F. any more than it was by many trade union leaders. The L.R.C. movement was a semi-conscious recognition of the conflict of interests between the proletariat and the master class; it was better in character than its leaders in the House of Commons and some of its candidates in constituencies. We wanted to make it a Socialist movement and must establish sympathetic relations with it.

H. QUELCH (Executive Council) opposed, and said that not a single new reason had been placed before them for adopting the course recommended. The S.D.F. had withdrawn from the L.R.C. for specific reasons, not a single one of which had been weakened by later events, but had, on the contrary, been strengthened. The object in the past had been to set up an eirenicon in the labour movement, not to bind people to support men and measures with whom and which they were not in agreement. At that time the L.R.C. had no candidates; now there were four M.P.'s drawing salaries from it, and only one of them could be called a Socialist. They were "independent" as long as a Tory Government was in power, but it would be another thing when a Liberal Government came in. If we rejoined the L.R.C. we should have no voice in the selection of candidates, but would be called upon to support them, no matter whom they were; we should be supporting them by the fact of our joining the L.R.C. Rejoining the L.R.C. had been urged as a means towards Socialist unity; it meant no such thing; it would be stated that, now we were all in one camp, there would be no need for Socialist unity. They could not have Socialist unity under the L.R.C. which contained anti-Socialists.

E. McALLEN (Stratford) questioned whether certain prominent people had really cut themselves away from their old political associations.

T. ROSTRON (Wigan) urged Socialists to work inside their trade unions.

MARTIN JUDGE (Lincoln) thought that with a Liberal Government in power, the L.R.C. would have to come our way, or crumble to pieces.

HERBERT BURROWS (Lynn) did not attach much importance to

the Socialist resolution passed at the last L.R.C. Conference; and quoted from a speech by D. Shackleton that the L.R.C. must make itself more powerful in the House of Commons before they considered what their policy and programme should be; considering a programme might cause opposition to Shackleton on the child-labour question. Rejoining the L.R.C. would mean an entire change in the electoral policy of the S.D.F.

The following telegram was here read from the Conference of the Printers' Warehousemen at Leicester:

"Social Democratic Federation Conference Northampton.—Fraternal greetings from Printers' Warehousemen's Conference, Leicester. £25 granted comrade Quelch's candidature and to forward Social Revolution.—EVANS, Secretary.

The reading of this telegram caused great cheering.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) could never see any reason for our leaving the L.R.C. He was as much disgusted as any man with what took place at the L.R.C. Conference at Manchester, but he believed the Labour movement was better than those at its head. They should endeavour to carry the Red Flag right into the midst of these people. He criticised severely the remarks made by E. McAllen that palliatives were "dead sea fruit," and believed that the talk about "benevolent neutrality" towards such bodies as the L.R.C. was largely a cloak for hypocrisy.

H. M. HYNDMAN (Liverpool) was in favour of our leaving the L.R.C., because he believed our position there to be untenable; and the policy of the L.R.C. had changed for the worse. If we rejoined the L.R.C., he would be bound by its constitution not to oppose Shackleton on the question of Child Labour—not even on the floor of the House of Commons. He denied that we had not the friendship of Trade Unionists. Although he had attacked them when he thought they were wrong, he was sure they regarded him as honest in the criticisms he had made. He was in favour of coming to terms with everyone wherever possible, but not at the expense of Socialism. This was the last moment to consider whether we should go back on independent action.

J. JONES (South West Ham) regretted that the Socialist resolution had been carried at the last L.R.C. Conference, for he was certain it was not seriously meant. Inside the I.L.P. and the trade unionists, the S.D.F. policy was gaining recruits every day; don't try to convert Crooks, Shackleton, and others, but convert the people who sent them there. By standing as an organisation outside movements that were not definite or consistent, we stood to gain when those movements had demonstrated their failure. F. G. JONES (Fulham) said that the S.D.F. has always been actively hostile to all capitalist movements but not to Labour movements, and because we could not join forces with such bodies as the L.R.C. we were not therefore necessarily opposed to them. It was

put forward that this was an opportune time to convert a working-class party into a class-conscious Socialist movement. We were, of course, an opportunist party, opportunist as to the means for obtaining our ends. But it was not opportunism to sink fundamental principles and independence of action. As advocates of Socialist unity we must recognise that we cannot reconcile the irreconcilable.

The resolution was supported by W. Pirrs (West Leeds), and opposed by D. N. LANCASTER (Rawtenstall) G. W. PATTERSON (Shoreditch) and J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton).

J. Moore (Rochdale) in reply, said he was prepared to use the term "Labour" only, and asked what there was derogatory in it. If the men of the L.R.C. were frauds, which he did not believe, why did we not fight them tooth and nail, for they were our most insidious enemies. If members could voluntarily accept presidencies of Trades Councils in London or elsewhere and thereby become morally bound to the L.R.C. to which they were affiliated, what logical objection was there to our rejoining the L.R.C.?

Were we going to leave the moulding of the working-class movement to the leaders of the I.L.P.? Would it not be better to help them and stimulate them by every possible means?

The Stratford amendment, on being put to the Conference, was carried by 52 votes to 18, thus disposing of the Rochdale resolution. J. JONES (South-West Ham) moved, and J. F. GREEN (Central) seconded, that we reaffirm the present position of the S.D.F. towards the L.R.C. This was carried by 55 votes to 11, and passed nem. con. as a substantive resolution.

The Conference adjourned till 9 o'clock on Sunday morning.

Councillor J. GRIBBLE presided at Sunday morning's sitting.

The following report from the Executive Council was considered:—

Since the last Annual Conference, 25 ordinary and five special and adjourned meetings of the Executive Council have been held. Of the 25 ordinary meetings, four have been meetings of the full Executive Council, London and provincial. The attendances of the members of the Executive Council have been as follows:—F. G. Jones, 27 (once excused on S.D.F. business); H. Quelch, 23 (four times excused); J. F. Green, 26; T. Rothstein, 24; J. Hunter Watts, 24; W. A. Woodroffe, 20 (elected after Conference); Dora Montefiore (resigned), 2; W. Atkinson (Darwen), 2; Dan Irving (Burnley), 7; J. J. Kidd (Lynn), 3 (once excused); T. Lewis (Southampton), 4; J. E. McGlasson (Manchester), 4; and W. Gee (Northampton), 0 (twice excused).

The following new branches have been formed during the past year:—In London and suburbs: East Ham and West Islington; in the provinces: Birmingham (re-formed), Bacup (re-formed), Bradford, Brighton, Cleator Moor, Chesterfield, Haslingden, Hull, Leyland, Liverpool (East), Liverpool (West), Leeds (East), Longton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Ryhope Colliery, Sheffield (Crookes), and Wollaston; in Wales: Mid-Rhondda and Mountain Ash; in Scotland: Greenock and Methil; and in South Africa: Capetown. Under the new rule, allowing the admission of affiliated bodies to the organisation, passed

at the last Conference, the following societies have joined the S.D.F.:—The Paddington Socialist Society, the Leigh Socialist Society, the Rugby Socialist Society, and the London Branch of the Polish Socialist Party.

It has been found necessary, in our opinion, to bring before you again the question of members' contributions to their branches. The last Conference rejected all amendments to alter the present rate of 2d. per week. Nevertheless, certain branches complained that the rate was calculated to prevent the making of new members, and a circular was sent out to the branches asking whether any serious difficulty was experienced in collecting the minimum subscription of 2d. per week, and whether that figure constituted a real barrier in the way of enrolling new members. The result of this enquiry was not satisfactory. Only about half the branch secretaries sent in a record of their experiences. A slight majority of those who responded declared they did not experience any difficulty in collecting the contributions, but the expressions of opinion on the higher rate of contributions preventing an increase of members were about evenly divided; and in places where the rates of wages are low your Executive found that it was practically impossible to expect the 2d. per week contribution with any degree of regularity. They therefore decided to place upon the Conference agenda-paper the resolution moved by the Accrington Branch last Easter.

The action of the Conference—necessary though it was—in dealing with a couple of members who had been guilty of disruptive tactics inside the body, caused a certain amount of dissension in the London branches wherein those disruptive tactics had been personally carried on. Happily, this was soon ended by the entire withdrawal of those who sympathised with the tactics of the two members expelled by the Conference, and of the four whom we were subsequently forced to expel on account of their conduct. Portions of the Southwark, Kensal Town, and Peckham Branches seceded, but some of the members returned. The Battersea, Central West Ham, and Wood Green Branches wholly withdrew from the S.D.F., the membership of the two latter having come down to fourteen; but the name of the Battersea Branch was at once taken by the Clapham Junction Branch, which had been previously formed by those comrades who could no longer put up with the conduct of the majority.

Considerable local activity has been shown in the districts where the S.D.F. has Parliamentary candidates in the field, and every effort is being put forth by the active workers to promote those candidatures. Our four Parliamentary candidatures at the last Conference—for which the organisation is financially responsible—were Hyndman at Burnley, Quelch at Southampton, Thorne at South-West Ham, and Hewitt at Northampton; and the branches in the Rossendale Division of Lancashire have put forward W. Gee, for whose candidature we gave permission on the understanding that the money for the election expenses would be found apart from the War Chest; and we have sanctioned the initial steps in favour of the candidature of G. Bell for Hammersmith, who will be run by the South-Western Labour Representation Committee, a delegate body famous for having drafted a complete Socialist programme for all its candidates for the borough council and guardians' elections. Since then we have added to our list the candidatures of J. Jones for the Mining Division of Cornwall, Dan Irving for Accrington, and E. R. Hartley for East Bradford. Other suggestions regarding Social-Democratic candidatures have been made to us, but we have felt bound to decline further responsibility, for

we have perhaps already undertaken that which will tax our resources to the utmost to carry out in a manner worthy of our movement.

The financial statement for 1904 will show that the balance in the War Chest is steadily increasing, though not so fast as we could wish. The attention of members is called to the fact that it is upon this War Chest that the organisation must rely for providing at least the returning officers' expenses required to take our Parliamentary candidates to the poll. The War Chest has received considerable funds from the Pioneer Works, started by a few of our comrades at Northampton, and each month's return has furnished increasing profits. A preliminary prospectus has been issued for the purpose of turning the works into a co-operative concern, extending the business, and thus increasing their usefulness to our War Chest. The success which the efforts of our Northampton comrades have already achieved commends the Pioneer Boot Works to the general and generous support of the whole of the members and friends of the S.D.F., and your Executive take this opportunity of recording their cordial appreciation of the services rendered to the S.D.F. by those who initiated the Pioneer Boot Works, and have since carried them on so successfully.

The municipal elections last November gave us most encouraging results. Thirteen members of the S.D.F. were returned. Of these, five were sitting councillors, and eight were seats gained to the organisation. Two of our candidates were returned unopposed. Municipal voting is not a safe guide to Parliamentary voting, and, therefore, municipal results are not reliable gauges for Parliamentary contests. But they do most certainly prove that in constituencies where we poll heavily for municipal contests, and gain seats on local bodies, our Parliamentary candidatures are not, as formerly, propagandist ones only, but that they carry with them reasonable prospects of success at the next elections, if energy is put into the fight and funds furnished for the necessary expenses. It is well, therefore, to look specially at the municipal results in those places where we have Parliamentary candidates. The elections at Burnley gave our comrades another seat, with an increase in the Socialist and Labour vote, which was 2,326 against 2,987 for a combination of Liberal and Tory in the wards contested. At Northampton, although we did not gain any more seats, our vote increased from 3,367 in 1903 to 3,933 in 1904. At Southampton, T. Lewis, one of our town councillors, was re-elected with an increased vote and a much larger majority. In South West Ham the Socialist and Labour vote totalled 6,661 against 5,729 recorded for the Municipal Alliance.

Besides our gains, there is the fact that our votes, taken all round, were much larger per candidate than formerly, and a number of our candidates narrowly failed to secure election. In 39 contests our candidates polled a total of 21,225 votes against a total vote of 32,900 polled by our opponents in the constituencies in which our candidates were put forward. Thus we secured over two-fifths of the total votes cast.

The above figures concern the November municipal elections only. But we have besides contested 37 seats for other local elections, and the votes we have polled amount to 23,826. The results have shown 16 gains and three losses. Since the last Annual Conference we have thus contested over 70 seats for local elections, have polled 45,051 votes, and have gained 21 seats.

We congratulate the members of the S.D.F. on the splendid success which has attended our efforts in regard to the agitation for the most important of our palliative proposals—that of State Maintenance for the

children in our public schools. The last Annual Conference specially instructed us to set on foot an agitation in favour of State Maintenance. A number of important meetings upon the subject were held in various parts of the country, including a series of open-air meetings in London, which led up to a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, on Sunday, August 28th, in which a number of metropolitan trade unions took part. Since the re-opening of Trafalgar Square for public meetings under police regulation in 1892, meetings in that famous spot have never been equal to what they were previous to its being closed in 1887; but the meeting in favour of State Maintenance was unquestionably by far the greatest gathering that has been held there since meetings were again permitted. In addition to meetings, correspondence has been conducted between branches and their local M.P.'s pretty well throughout the year, as a reference to the files of "Justice" will show, and considerable prominence given to the question and to the activity of the S.D.F. in connection therewith. Special leaflets on the subject have been issued by the S.D.F., one containing a diagram setting forth the various diseases arising from underfeeding, and the Twentieth Century Press have produced a penny pamphlet written by our comrade J. Hunter Watt.

But above and beyond all was the National Labour Conference on State Maintenance, held in the Guildhall, London, on January 20th, 1905. This Conference, suggested by the S.D.F., received the support of the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee and the London Trades Council, and a Joint Conference Committee was responsible for the arrangements. It was a most gratifying surprise to the S.D.F. delegates to find that the resolution pledging the Conference to the full principle of State Maintenance was passed with such an overwhelming majority by the 250 delegates who were present.

The growth of unemployment in the country has brought the question of the unemployed prominently to the front, and we took the initiative, on the suggestion of your Organisation Committee, in pressing for a special autumn Session of Parliament to legislate upon the unemployed problem. Owing both to persistent Socialist agitation and the increasing number of Socialist and Labour members on various local bodies, the unemployed question received far more attention from local authorities than was the case years ago. But the more steps taken locally to deal with this glaring evil in capitalist society, the more it is proved that the question is a national and not a local one. Our demand for a special autumn Session of Parliament was taken up, we are glad to say, by a large number of prominent public people, as well as by local bodies, in all parts of the kingdom. We make special reference to the fact that this demand was originated by the S.D.F., for it was so quickly taken up by others that the S.D.F.—as usual—received little recognition for its initiative in this direction.

It is, of course, impossible to enter into all the details of the work done by the organisation during the autumn and winter on this question of the unemployed. Boards of guardians, town and borough councils, have been circularised by the S.D.F., setting forth our old proposals for dealing with the out-of-work problem, advocating, also, a special autumn Session of Parliament, and later demanding that the promise of the Unemployed Bill made in the King's Speech should not be disregarded by the Government. M.P.s, members of the Cabinet, and public men generally, have been written to, either from the Central Office, or by branch secretaries. In this connection, we think it only right to place on record our recognition of the great amount of work done by many branch secretaries, who have spared neither time nor

trouble in sending out a mass of correspondence to public bodies, public men, and to the press, with the result that the organisation has been brought into considerable public prominence.

Certain branches appear to have regarded with some disfavour our decision to ask speakers to place dates at the disposal of the Central Office, for which a fee, in addition to out-of-pocket expenses, should be charged to those branches or organisations desiring speakers for those particular dates. We believe that these expressions of disfavour are largely the result of misunderstanding. Any speaker is quite open to make engagements with branches without fee; and, even in the case of dates which have been given to the Central Office, there is no desire to act in an absolutely rigid fashion. It is always in the power of the London portion of the Executive, or the Organisation Committee, to waive the fee whenever and wherever it is thought advisable to waive it. So far from our decision being a barrier to weak branches obtaining speakers, we are sure it will be found to have precisely the contrary effect. Already a number of fees have been received for lecturing, and the engagements made for this year will, we hope, give to the organisation a means of paying special attention to weak branches and districts where no branches exist.

General propaganda work has, on the whole, shown a decided improvement. Audiences have displayed greater interest in our principles and our work. The number of speakers, too, is slightly increasing, but not nearly so rapidly as is the demand for them. There is also an increasing desire on the part of branches for the services of speakers who can devote a week or a fortnight in one particular district, and this work can only be done by those who, like W. Gee, give practically the whole of their time to propaganda, or to those few who can occasionally leave employment for a short period, and return to it afterwards; and it needs, likewise, payment for time as well as travelling and other expenses. Hence the national organisation is being called upon more and more to provide subsidies to assist local branches in this work. We therefore accepted the offer made by Lady Warwick to provide the wages of J. Jones for six months, to enable him to devote his time to Socialist propaganda and organisation, as well as to his public duties on the West Ham Town Council.

The S.D.F. was well represented at the International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam last August, having by a slight majority the most numerous section of the British delegation. One of the most remarkable features of the Congress was the demonstration of international solidarity made at the opening of the Congress by comrades Plechanoff and Katayama, showing how the principle of internationalism can rise above patriotism even in its strongest form, such as always comes to the front when two nations are at war. Since the Congress we have done our best to get together a meeting representing the sections of the British delegation as a first step towards carrying out the resolution of the Congress on Socialist Unity; and we have at last succeeded.

A considerable amount of leaflet literature has again been distributed during the past year. In addition to the two leaflets on "State Maintenance already referred to, we have sent out many thousands of "What is Socialism?", "To the Man in the Street," "The Class War," and the "Unemployed," and special manifestoes have also been issued on "Conscription," and "Foreign Policy."

We feel that this report would not be complete without a reference to the work of the Women's Committee of the S.D.F. Their work has been carried on by a comparatively few comrades, and under difficult

circumstances. A special leaflet addressed to women has been issued and distributed, but its distribution to women has not been found an easy matter. The Committee hope to be able to issue shortly two or three more leaflets addressed specially to women. Circles have been held in various parts, with the object of interesting women in the Socialist movement, and members of the Committee have assisted in certain electoral contests, especially at Edmonton.

Taking all things into consideration, the S.D.F. has had a much more encouraging year's work since the last Conference than in any of the past ten years. To say so is to tell the simple, unvarnished truth. Take the two questions which we have made practically our own—State Maintenance of Children, and the Unemployed. The public attention which has been devoted to these two questions during the last six or eight months is due almost wholly to our efforts. If we had never agitated these questions year after year, they would have passed unnoticed by many who are now devoting their energies to the solution of these problems by some means other than Socialist proposals. That they will fail is certain, and their failure will make our position clearer. Starting with the free feeding of children, which was then denounced as one of the most hopeless proposals that any band of dreamers could possibly have put forward, we have gone on to State Maintenance; and nothing shows the necessity of going for full measures in this land of compromise more than the fact that the advocacy of an advanced proposal tends to make a less advanced proposal popular. Our advocacy of State Maintenance has brought us within measurable distance of "State Feeding"—the recognition that the nation, as well as the parent, is responsible for the upbringing of children. With regard to the unemployed agitation, never before have we received so much support from local public bodies in our demands upon the Government; and no higher praise can be given us than the attack made upon us at a recent meeting of the Charity Organisation Society, where it was publicly stated that both Government and local bodies had been influenced by the mischief which the Social-Democratic Federation was doing. Your Executive Council feel, therefore, that the whole organisation have every reason to be proud of and encouraged by the result of the year's work, and to have every hope that we shall do even better in 1905 than in 1904.

Questions were asked about, and some discussion took place upon, the Parliamentary candidatures at Accrington, Bradford, Camborne, Rosendale and South-West Ham, and it was eventually proposed that these candidatures be referred back for the consideration of the new Executive. This was carried by 57 votes to 4, and the Executive Council report adopted.

The Standing Orders Committee reported the result of the elections of the Executive Council. London portion elected: H. Quelch 73, J. F. Green 70, J. Hunter Watts 56, F. G. Jones 53, T. Rothstein 45, and J. G. Webster 40; not elected: W. A. Woodroffe 31, Clara Hendin 23, J. W. G. Mercer 22, H. Barnes 5, G. W. Hasted 5, and W. Geard 4; provincial portion elected: Dan Irving (Burnley) 72, J. Gribble (Northampton) 67, Rose Jarvis (Croydon) 65, T. Lewis (Southampton) 64, J. E. McGlasson (Manchester) 55, and H. Hinshelwood (Glasgow) 37; not elected: W. R. Smith (Norwich) 36, and C. R. Vincent (Truro) 23.

J. JONES (South West Ham) moved :—

“ That in view of the efforts which are now being made to promote in Parliament a Women’s Suffrage Bill, which, if passed, will only partially enfranchise women, will perpetuate all the present franchise anomalies, retain property qualification, and which will especially exclude large masses of working women and all married women from that vote, this Conference urges all Social-Democrats to strenuously oppose that Bill, and to continue to support as strenuously the first plank in the Social-Democratic Federation political programme, adult suffrage for both sexes, as the only real socialistic and democratic franchise measure which will be of any service to the workers at large.”

A protest should be made against the action of the I.L.P. and the L.R.C. in support of the limited franchise Bill, notwithstanding the resolution of the L.R.C. Conference.

HERBERT BURROWS (Lynn), in seconding the motion, complained that very artful and disingenuous attempts were being made to obtain signatures to a petition for a limited franchise, and that a large number of working women had been led away. Under the Bill now before the House of Commons the effect would be to throw the power of voting more into the hands of the middle-class women, and also to enfranchise the well-to-do West End unfortunate, but not the mother, wife, sister, and daughter of the working man.

H. M. HYNDMAN (East Liverpool) said women canvassers were threatening that if Socialists did not go in for the middle-class measure to which reference had been made they would do their best to oust Social-Democratic Federation candidates, but they were not going to give way to female intimidation.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) said that the figures relating to the enfranchisement of working women under the limited Bill were taken from one part of Lancashire only.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

G. W. PATTERSON (Shoreditch) moved :—

“ That this annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation records its emphatic protest against and condemnation of the gigantic system of sweating carried on under the pretence of charity and religion by the social wings of the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and kindred organisations.”

They did not desire to introduce any religious controversy into the question, but he thought it was high time to protest against religious exploitation, and pointed to one of the Salvation Army farms as an institution conducted on conditions which were positively disgraceful, and he gave particulars as to the manner in which the unemployed had been dealt with at the Hadleigh Farm Colony. He also alluded to the recent development of the Salvation

Army as wholesale newsagents, which was injuring many local people. It was to be regretted that General Booth and the head of the Church Army had been patted on the back by an exalted personage. Both these gentlemen had undertaken work which properly belonged to the State.

J. P. LLOYD (Marylebone) moved :—

“ That the Executive Council be requested to consider methods by which members of the organisation may be kept better informed as to the details of the work of the Executive Council.”

After some discussion, in which J. F. GREEN (Central), A. W. HARDER (Walthamstow), A. BARNAKÖ (Manchester), and DAN IRVING (Burnley) took part; the previous question was moved and lost, and the resolution agreed to.

A. H. WATSON (Manchester) opened the discussion on “ District Councils and Decentralisation.” He sketched what he considered to be the duties of such councils in regard to propaganda and organisation ; the production of pamphlets and leaflets suited to the habits and methods of thought of the people of the district and dealing with problems, peculiar to such districts, from the Social-Democratic point of view ; the development of a county or district policy with regard to elections, Parliamentary or otherwise, in order that the whole efforts of the county might be concentrated on such candidatures as would do most good to the party as a whole, as in the case of the present Parliamentary candidatures in Lancashire. Further such councils would be able to give much greater effect to the agitation of such prominent questions as the Party from time to time considered it necessary to agitate nationally, as “ State Maintenance,” “ The Unemployed Problem,” &c.

He was of the opinion that such councils might with advantage be made the administrative bodies for their own areas, in contradistinction to the present method of government from an executive in London. The councils should collect all dues and administer them in connection with work in their own particular area and that for national party purposes an executive council should be formed by representatives from each council, who should deal with questions concerning the whole party and for whose work a fund should be made by the various councils contributing a certain quota of their revenue. Such an arrangement would necessitate permanent secretaries for each district as well as a national party secretary, but, in the case of the district secretaries, they might also take in hand organising work in addition to their secretarial duties. The best results could be achieved only by men who lived in the various districts and understood them. For instance, it was impossible for a Lancashire man to appreciate London methods of organisation and *vise versa*; one was foreign to the other. He therefore urged

that the vesting of Executive power in the hands of the councils, with their own secretaries and administration of the funds, would lead to a better return. The branches would take a keener interest in the affairs of the Party by reason of that self-government, and the fact that it rested with them to make the best of the movement in their own district.

The discussion was continued by A. J. ARMSTRONG (Carlisle), who spoke of the difficulty in taking any step in the direction suggested in large areas like Scotland, where frequent meetings of a District Council would be expensive to the branches.

H. W. LEE opened a discussion on "The Sale of Socialist Literature." He pointed out the importance to the movement and to the general propaganda, as well as to the organisation itself, of the dissemination of Socialist literature, especially that issued by the Twentieth Century Press on behalf of the S.D.F. In the matter of sales of pamphlets at meetings, they had to consider not only the quantity but the quality of those sold to the public. They were constantly asked to issue fresh pamphlets on various phases of Socialism, but those fresh issues were kept back by the fact that the sale of those already printed was not pushed with sufficient vigour. Branches should make a point of ensuring a great increase in the sale of *Justice* during the open-air meeting season now that the paper had been enlarged.

J. MOORE (Rochdale), A. M. DRESSIN (Bradford), and D. PEARSON (Edmonton) took part in the discussion, and some suggestions were made for increasing the sale of Socialist literature.

A discussion on the State Maintenance of Children was opened by J. HUNTER WATTS. Referring to the middle-class, which exhorts the working-class to a spirit of independence, whilst not relieving the latter of the burden of supporting the former's children, he said that, as the Communist Manifesto points out, it has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that once bound together the community and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, and a callous "cash payment." "Where is the money to come from?" is the patriot-cry which middle-class politicians of both parties din into the ears of men like Sir John Gorst and the Hon. Claude Hay, who have had the courage to protest against the barbarity of trying to stuff knowledge into the brains of children whose bellies are empty, and who have the hardihood to propose the provision of free meals in our national schools.

"Heretics Father Clarges, who died to save charges," is an epitaph on the gravestone of a notorious miser interred in Portsmouth Churchyard. If the physical deterioration of our industrial population is not speedily checked, the British Isles will soon become the graveyard of an "Imperial race" that died to save the rates! And the class which the workers have benevolently preserved in sound physical condition (though it has been unable to check its moral degeneracy) will have

to swallow a bigger pill than State Maintenance and reconcile itself to the prospect of self-maintenance and self-defence. When it arrives that even more than 60 per cent. of our army recruits have to be rejected because they are physically incapable of shouldering a musket; when even more than a tenth of the population have been submerged into the passively rotting mass of unemployables, the members of the class represented by Mr. Balfour and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman may find themselves in the unpleasant predicament of having to do their own work, and defend their own property.

It would be well if the report of the debate on April 18th in the House of Commons on the subject of Underfed School Children, could be studied by every intelligent workman in the British Isles. He would learn from it how little he has to expect from the tender mercies of the class which lives by the exploitation of labour, since it can close its ears even to the "cry of the children," while their statesmen hypocritically assert that their desire to preserve the little folk from "the taint of pauperism" prompts them to repel the proposal "to feed them at other people's expense."

That the governing class is as ignorant as it is brutal was amply illustrated by several of the speeches delivered in the course of that debate. The titled nonentity who does the electors of Islington the honour of representing them, remarked that "if we could do away with excessive drinking and betting there would be no occasion for any proposal like this." Betting at Tattersall's in thousands of pounds, and running up a wine-merchants' bill which in one year exceeds the sum any skilled artisan can earn in a lifetime, are trifling extravagances which do not even embarrass the incomes of numberless wealthy idlers, but if the workers would abstain from backing horses for a shilling or two, and deny themselves of their "four" ale, this wiseacre would have us believe that trade crises would be averted, and the poverty that is bred by capitalism out of plethora exterminated.

The propertyless wage-worker, in relation to his wife and children, has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations, and the sooner he understands his own position, the sooner he will resent this bourgeois drivel about parental responsibility and the practice of thrift and sobriety.

Stripped bare of sentimental phrases, we find that these moral axioms are intended to inculcate the duty of the wage-slave to serve his master well, and to breed slaves to serve his master's sons. Hitherto the conflict between the propertyless and the propertied classes, between the exploited and their exploiters, has been an unequal one, because the former are better organised and more clearly class-conscious. Dare to lay hands on the sacred rights of property, and Liberal and Tory forget their party differences and combine to protect those rights. They have an uneasy sense that collective maintenance of the children might prove a stepping-stone

to collective ownership of the means of life; therefore, Free Maintenance is opposed alike by Liberal and Tory, and the converts we gain from either party are the few whose motto, to their honour be it said, is *flat justitia ruit cœlum*—do justice to the children cost what it may.

With the spread of Social-Democracy the conflict grows less unequal. One element of weakness in the ranks of the exploiting class—that individual interests often conflict with their class interests—makes itself apparent, while the workers are gaining clearer comprehension of the truth that they have no individual interests worth considering apart from their class interests. The worker who would serve himself must serve his class, and incidentally it will be discovered one day that, by doing so, he has served the cause of all mankind, "for his hope is the hope of the ages, his cause is the cause of the world." Trade Unionists may reflect with shame on the justice of the reproach urged against their representatives in the House of Commons by Mr. Claude Hay, that they afforded him very little support in his efforts to induce the Legislature to deal with this subject; but it must be recorded to their credit that Trade Unionists gave their undivided support to the resolution passed at the Guildhall Conference in favour of State Maintenance, and turned a deaf ear to Dr. Macnamara's appeal to limit their demand to "free meals." On this question, the organised workers of Great Britain now show a united front, and if, with increasing resolution they assert their right to maintain their own children by their collective industry in some measure of the comfort in which by the same means they maintain other people's children, the plundering, blundering, governing class will not dare interdict the rescue of the children from the cruel clutches of capitalism.

A short and congratulatory discussion followed in which D. Carmichael (Battersea), Dan Irving (Burnley), and Herbert Burrows (Lynn) took part.

J. G. Webster opened a discussion on "Socialist Criticism of Current Proposals for dealing with the Unemployed." He said the subject was worthy of the attention of the Conference because of the untiring energy with which the question had been pursued by the S.D.F. in the past, and also because it was one of the plainest proofs that the confusion in industry arising from social production and individual ownership could not be overcome by the supporters of the capitalistic system.

No surprise need be felt at these various current proposals having failed when those who shared in their origin were telling us that the cause of unemployment was due to a want of capital on account of the late South African War, and that, if the working-class spent less on drink they would be able to create more work for themselves by spending their money on other commodities. The facts were that there was plenty of capital to apply many times over for the recent Japanese Loan, and instead of more work being wanted the

working-class required less by a better distribution of the present necessary work.

He then criticised Mr. Long's scheme, which, he said, was introduced to draw public attention away from the demands of the S.D.F. for a Special Autumn Session of Parliament to deal with the question, which at the time received so large a measure of support from all the local authorities throughout the country. He computed that at least 100,000 unemployed had registered in London, and of these Mr. Long's Committee had dealt with a little over 2,000. Of the latter, 1,900 had been employed by the L.C.C. at Long Grove, and in the Parks and Open Spaces, and quite probably the L.C.C. would have engaged this number even if Mr. Long's Committee had never existed.

But this did not, of course, touch even the fringe of the question. General Booth had taken 200 men at 10s. per man, and it was stated the General acknowledged that the labour of each of these was worth 20s. per week, and claimed that each man cost 9s. 6d. per week to maintain. As an evidence of the liberality which animated the General, he gave each man 6d. per week pocket-money, leaving a net profit to the Salvation Army of 20s. per week per man.

Referring to the Rev. Mr. Carlile, Webster said he had made personal inquiries at the Church Army, and had been offered the services of a carpenter guaranteed by special and searching investigation to be sober, industrious, competent, and reliable, at 6d. per hour. He called the special attention of the trade unions to this, and wondered how long they were to tolerate it.

Passing on to the Government's Unemployed Bill, which had just been introduced, it was, he said, as useless as Mr. Long's scheme. It was, of course, at last a recognition of the obligation of the State to deal with the question, and as the C.O.S.—"the cringe or starve" organisation—had rightly averred, it was largely due to the astuteness of S.D.F. leaders, and the grit of men like Jack Williams, who had gained many a crust for the starving unemployed, that this recognition had been obtained.

The Bill was pernicious for many reasons. One of these was that men should be paid less than they might receive if otherwise employed. It should be the duty of the S.D.F. to see that they always received more, and so by drawing away the producers from the clutches of the capitalist, engage them in co-operative methods, until at last there had been built up that co-operative commonwealth which was the aim of all Social-Democrats.

HERBERT BURROWS touched on the unemployment of women, where he found there was even greater difficulty than in dealing with the unemployment of men. No palliative proposal even had been put forward, and only the Social-Democratic Federation had touched the fringe of the question.

It was suggested that the facts with reference to the sweating

system in the Salvation and Church Armies should be published for the information of members.

J. F. GREEN (Central) read a paper on the "Alien Question," prepared by Th. Rothstein, who was unable to be present. Alien baiting was an old trick practised by all ruling classes from time immemorial. Let those who talk about being overrun by swarms of wretched aliens take these figures into consideration:—

In 1901, there were in the whole of the United Kingdom, 286,925 aliens, which number, in proportion to the entire population of 41,458,721, works out at the staggering percentage of 0.69! At that very year the proportion of aliens to the general population of France was 2.66 per cent., of Germany 1.38 per cent., of Belgium 2.82, of Austria 1.98, of Holland 1.04, of Denmark 3.26, of Norway 3.05, of Switzerland 9.58, and of the United States 13.71 per cent.! What a humbug; what a people to allow itself to be humbugged! The whole legislative machinery of the country, so slow, so heavy on other occasions, is put into motion to produce an exceptional law against a fraction of one per cent. of the population at the time when other States can very well stand the "strain" of a percentage four or five times higher!

But, it is said, *our* aliens are a particularly obnoxious lot. Some fifteen years ago the cry was that they compete with the Englishman in the labour market and drive him out of employment. It has been found out that the various branches of trade in which the aliens are mostly engaged—such as tailoring, boot and shoe making, cabinet making and others—have in those particular lines been created by the aliens themselves, and thus, so far from having been taken away from the Englishman have actually opened to him additional possibilities for employment in those trades and occupations which are industrially and commercially connected with them. Some five-and-twenty years ago, for instance, all the ladies' costumes and jackets on the English market were of German make, and of men's tailoring none was known but the best and most expensive so-called bespoke trade, so the "lower orders" had to be content with second-hand clothes. Now not only is the whole of the home market in these articles supplied by the "undesirable" alien, but England also does in them an excellent export trade of over six million pounds sterling per annum.

Likewise in other trades. Even the much-talked-of competition of the thousand or so Lithuanian miners turns out a myth, as everyone will acknowledge who has read the evidence of Mr. Robert Smillie before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Mr. Smillie's first objection to them was that they, not knowing the English language and not being able to read the rules, are a source of danger to their fellow workers; on being pressed, however, to say "whether any single accident to a British workman had been traced to these foreigners," he is obliged to reply, "No." The truth is, of course,

that they are given the rules in translation, and not being in the least anxious to cause an explosion in which they themselves would perish, naturally take them to heart. Mr. Smillie is then compelled to fall back on his second line of reserve. He states that the Lithuanian miner (being used to a lower standard of life) is prepared to accept a lower wage, and is generally "more docile," more submissive to the employer than an Englishman. But this contention, too, soon breaks down. The Lithuanian, as soon as he learns the trade, receives exactly the same wage as a Scottish miner, and as for "docility," Mr. Smillie is himself obliged to confess "when it comes to fighting, they fight side by side with us."

Then as regards other charges. First there is the charge of uncleanness—a grave, almost a capital charge! Did not the mighty British Empire go to South Africa and take away from Kruger and his people their land because they were of "unclean habits," and never washed themselves?

The foreigner does not share the all absorbing passion of the British for "respectability." His wife to him is a companion, his children are to him his greatest treasure, and if after he has provided, as far as his means go, for their bodily and mental comfort, he has no further means to "beautify" his home, he will simply let that slide. His wife will never be turned into a domestic slave, nor will his children go to school without breakfast. That is why his family is so singularly free from disease, and his children are the healthiest and brightest at school. You Britshers are the precise reverse. Your first care is for the externals of life, and only your second thoughts are devoted to what I may call the "internals." But then, of course, you are so decent and respectable! How easily the hypocritical bourgeoisie imposes upon you!

As to overcrowding, the most overcrowded district in London is Stepney. For the whole of it the percentage of overcrowded reaches 33.3 of the entire population, falling to 19.8 in the Registration sub-district of Mile End Old Town (Eastern), and rising to 55.1 in that of Spitalfields. A most unwholesome state of things, no doubt. But what says the Report of the Royal Commission? It says: "If these aliens had not become residents in the East End of London, the district would probably still have been overcrowded. Economical and commercial causes would have tended much to produce this result." And they point out the continually going on process of clearances and conversions of dwelling houses into factories and offices, whilst the witnesses trace the emigration from the district or the decay of many important industries. No wonder the native population leaves the locality, while that remaining in it overcrowd. The proper remedy for the evil is more houses, on the one hand, and a more stringent application of the sanitary law, on the other; instead, legislation proposes to keep the alien out altogether, thus shifting the

blame for an unwholesome state of things from their own shoulders to those of the foreigner. A very shabby trick, indeed!

There remains the charge of criminality,—as absurd as any of the former. Out of a total prison population in England and Wales of 176,657 in 1902-3 3,449, that is, less than 2 per cent. were aliens. Is it not a source of danger to life and property as well as a source of moral contagion to the virtuous native population? And are not, as Mr. Akers Douglas told us the other day, the judges justified in complaining that they are simply overwhelmed with alien criminals? Of course it is said the evil is growing. As recently as 1898-99 there were in H.M. Prisons but 2,181 aliens, and now there is an increase of over 1,000. But is not British criminality growing as well? Do we not read the most alarming statements both in the official publications and in the press concerning this growth? The truth is, criminality is bound to grow as capitalism proceeds in its course; and the aliens are no more immune from the effects of the general misery and ignorance than the native.

It is, however, perhaps worth while to point out that the largest group of alien criminals ($23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the whole) are your American cousins, and that more than one-third of the aliens who enjoy the hospitality of His Majesty's Prisons are sentenced for petty offences to terms of imprisonment ranging from one month and under!

J. P. Lloyd (Marylebone), A. Barnako (Manchester), and Herbert Burrows (Lynn) took part in the discussion, and the Conference re-affirmed the resolution of the Burnley Conference. For the place for the Annual Conference of 1906, the voting on the first count was as follows:—Bradford 25, Leeds 22, London 14, and Sheffield 14. On the second voting the figures were:—Bradford 38, Leeds 35. Bradford was therefore chosen.

The discussion on the "Russso-Japanese War and its Effect upon Asia" was opened by H. M. Hyndman. It is to be regretted that a full report of comrade Hyndman's speech cannot be published in the official report of the Conference. He referred to the extraordinary development of Japan into a great nation of the Far East, and the extraordinarily short period in which she had come to the front. As far back as 1869, in any discussion on the "yellow peril," it was always China that was considered, never Japan. Hyndman gave a rapid historical survey of Japanese development, describing how the Japanese aristocracy came to the conclusion that their privileges were injurious to their country, and surrendered them—a thing no aristocracy has ever done before. By 1889 Japan had passed through the transition from feudalism to the modern State, having developed in twenty years to an extent which had taken us from three to four centuries. Describing the incidents from the Chino-Japanese war up to the outbreak of the present war in the Far East, Hyndman said that we Social-Democrats have

been very correct in our forecasts. For the first time a purely Asiatic force met a European force, and routed it. He had watched with satisfaction the Japanese victories, because of the results which will accrue from them.

The marvellous thing about the Japanese was their spirit of self-sacrifice. It could scarcely be understood among Western nations. Just as William Morris said, "Named and Nameless all Live in Us," so the Japanese feels that the spirits of all who have worked for his country and the development of his race have put him where he is, and are urging him forward to achieve even greater things than they had achieved. The feeling of grateful and reverential love and intense duty thus created inspired him with a conception of obligation to his living countrymen and to those who would come after him most difficult to understand.

He ridiculed the idea of the Conservatives that our alliance with Japan had made our position safe in the Far East. The victories of the Japanese had caused a total change of feeling throughout Asia. Not only was India beginning to believe that she had some rights against a parcel of marauders who had been bloodsucking her for four or five generations, but the Russian Empire, that most fatal influence in Europe, had been shaken forever. He hoped that Japan, which had learned to overthrow the Russian despotism would refuse to inaugurate a despotism of her own.

W. Kranen said a few words of warm appreciation of the address to which they had listened. Herbert Burrows delivered his customary powerful closing address, and the Conference closed with the singing of the "Red Flag" with the greatest enthusiasm.

Socialist Unity.

Resolution passed by the International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam, 1905, on "Socialist Unity."

"The Congress declares that, in order that the working classes may be able to exercise its struggle against capitalism, it is essential that in every country there should be but one Socialist party, as there is but one proletariat opposed to the capitalist parties.

"For this reason, it is the imperative duty of all comrades, Socialist groups and organisations to strive to the fullest extent to realise this Socialist unity upon the basis of the principles laid down by International Congresses, in the interest of the international proletariat, as against those who are responsible for the fatal consequences arising from the continuation of divisions in their ranks.

"The International Socialist Bureau, and those National parties where unity exists, therefore gladly offer their services and co-operation for the attainment of this unity."

LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES ON PUBLIC BODIES.

GUARDIANS.

CITY AND TOWN COUNCILS.			
Blackburn	...	ALBERT BROOKES.	C. J. INCE.
"	...	JAS. DAWSON.	MRS. HOLDEN.
Bradford	...	FLEMING ECCLES.	ALBERT BROOKS.
Brighton	...	C. A. GLYDE.	FLEMING ECCLES.
Burnley	...	W. EVANS.	C. A. GLYDE.
"	...	A. HEUN.	A. HEUN.
Hanley	...	DAN IRVING.	D. IRVING.
Higham Ferrers	...	D. JONES.	D. JONES.
Northampton	...	THOMAS H. WHITTINGHAM.	THOMAS H. WHITTINGHAM.
"	...	F. H. MARTIN.	F. H. MARTIN.
Reading	...	J. GRIBBLE.	J. GRIBBLE.
Rochdale	...	F. PITTS.	F. PITTS.
Southend	...	J. W. G. SMITH.	J. W. G. SMITH.
Truro	...	T. WATERS.	A. A. WATERS.
West Ham	...	A. E. TURNER.	MRS. L. WILSON.
"	...	T. DOODY.	A. PHILLIPS.
"	...	D. BARKER.	W. G. CHINN.
"	...	W. A. PHILLIPS.	RICHARD THOMPSON.
"	...	B. CUNNINGHAM.	THOMAS WHITTAKER.
"	...	J. JONES.	J. JONES.
"	...	A. HAYDAY.	JOSEPH WAKE.
"	...	E. MCALLEN.	T. LEWIS.
"	...	P. MANSFIELD.	MRS. DESPARD.
"	...	W. THORNE.	G. BISSELL.
Whitehaven	...	JAMES BURNEY.	
"	...	JOHN HANLON.	
URBAN DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCILS.			
Edmonton	...	W. J. G. MERCER.	
"	...	H. BARNES.	
"	...	W. WILKINSON.	
Grays	...	J. H. JAY.	
Gwinnear (Cornwall)	...	F. GOODWIN.	
Northfleet (Kent)	...	W. G. CHINN.	
Padham	...	S. RODEN.	
Watford	...	ROBERT HARGREAVES.	
F. H. GORLE.			

PARISH COUNCILS (SCOTLAND).			
Aberdeen	...	JAS. GORDON.	
"	...	DAVID PALMER.	
Glasgow	...	J. ARMOUR.	

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCILS.

Hackney	...	E. C. FAIRCHILD.	
Islington	...	W. D. SHARPE.	
Fulham	...	E. HONEY.	
Fulpar	...	A. G. SMITH.	

BOROUGH AUDITORS.

Bacup	...	...	J. P. CUNNAME.
Blackburn	...	...	J. H. THORNTON.
Burnley	...	...	SAMUEL BOSTOCK.
Ilkeston	...	...	W. ASPIN.
Nelson	...	...	H. BUNTING.
Northampton	...	...	YATES ROTHWELL.
Rawtenstall	...	...

SCHOOL BOARDS.

Aberdeen	...	...	THOMAS KENNEDY.
Hamilton	...	...	JOHN DOWGRAYS.

LIBRARY COMMITTEES.

Barking	...	...	J. R. TYLER.
Ilkeston	...	...	HARRY SILBURN.

(N.B.—This does not pretend to be a complete list of S.D.F. members on public bodies. It is as complete as can be furnished from the information supplied by the branches.—H. W. L.).

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.

OBJECT.

The Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange, to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete Emancipation of Labour from the Domination of Capitalism and Landlordism, with the establishment of Social and Economic Equality between the Sexes.

The economic development of modern society is characterised by the more or less complete domination of the capitalistic mode of production over all branches of human labour.

The capitalistic mode of production, because it has the creation of profit for its sole object, therefore favours the larger capital, and is based upon the divorce of the majority of the people from the instruments of production and the concentration of these instruments in the hands of a minority. Society is thus divided into two opposite classes: one, the capitalists and their sleeping partners, the landlords and loanmengers, holding in their hands the means of production, distribution, and exchange; and being, therefore, able to command the labour of others; the other, the working-class, the wage-earners, the proletariat, possessing nothing but their labour power, and being consequently forced by necessity to work for the former.

The social division thus produced becomes wider and deeper with every new advance in the application of labour-saving machinery. It is most clearly recognisable, however, in the times of industrial and commercial crises, when, in consequence of the present chaotic conditions of carrying on national and international industry, production periodically comes to a standstill, and a number of the few remaining independent producers are thrown into the ranks of the proletariat. Thus, while on one hand there is incessantly going on an accumulation of capital, wealth, and power into a steadily-diminishing number of hands, there is, on the other hand, a constantly growing insecurity of livelihood for the mass of wage-earners, an increasing disparity between human wants and the opportunity of acquiring the means for their satisfaction, and a steady physical and mental deterioration among the more poverty-stricken of the population.

But the more this social division widens, the stronger grows the revolt—more conscious abroad than here—of the proletariat against the capitalist system of society in which this division and all that accompanies it have originated, and find such fruitful soil. The capitalist mode of production, by massing the workers in large factories, and creating an interdependence, not only between various trades and branches of industries, but even national industries, prepares the ground and furnishes material for a universal class war. That class war may at first—as in this country—be directed against the abuses of the system, and not against the system itself; but sooner or later the workers must come to recognise that nothing short of the expropriation of the capitalist class, the ownership by the community of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, can put an end to their abject economic condition; and then the class war will become conscious instead of unconscious on the part of the working classes, and they will have for their ultimate object the overthrow of the capitalist system. At the same time, since the capitalist class holds and uses the power of the State to safeguard its position and beat off any attack, the class war must assume a political character, and become a struggle on the part of the workers for the possession of the political machinery.

It is this struggle for the conquest of the political power of the State, in order to effect a social transformation, which International Social-Democracy carries on in the name and on behalf of the working class. Social-Democracy, therefore, is the only possible political party of the proletariat. The Social-Democratic Federation is a part of this International Social-Democracy.